Insurgency & Counter-insurgency in the Middle East:
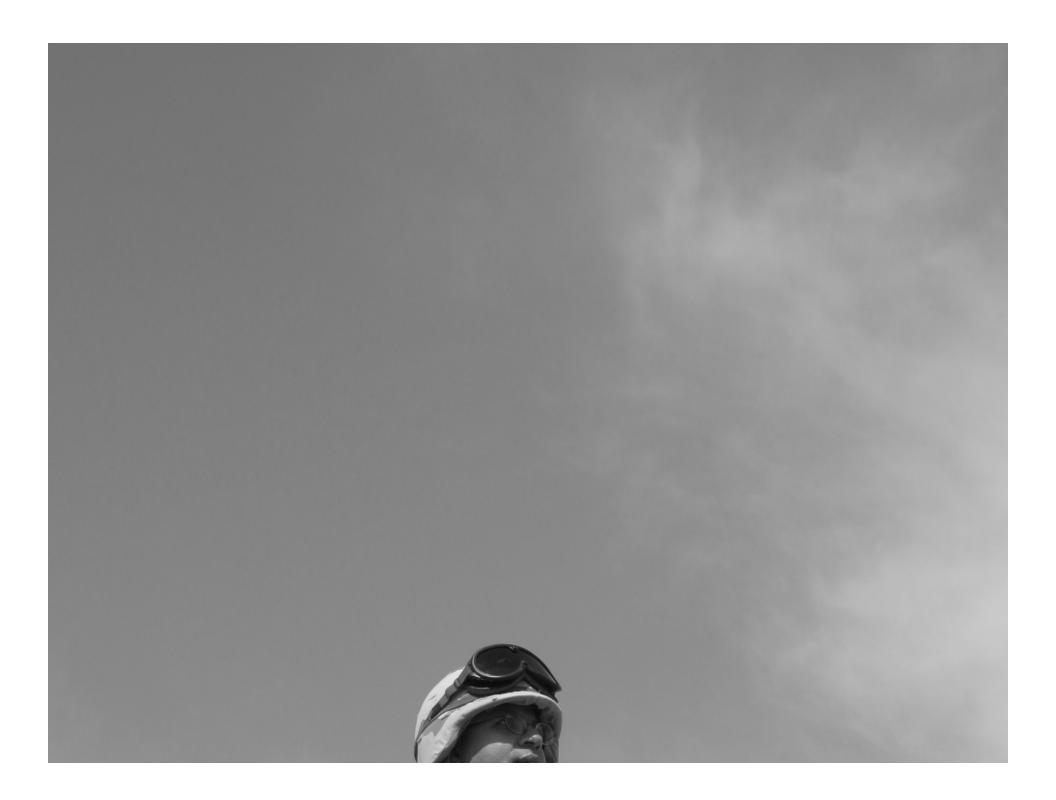
The Iraqi Insurgency in Theoretical, Historical & Comparative Perspective

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Unclassified Brief

Lessons of History

"The people of England have been led in Mesopotamia into a trap from which it will be hard to escape with dignity and honour. They have been tricked into it by a steady withholding of information. The Baghdad communiques are belated, insincere, incomplete. Things have been far worse than we have been told, our administration more bloody and inefficient than the public knows. It is a disgrace to our imperial record, and may soon be too inflamed for any ordinary cure. We are today not far from disaster."

T.E. Lawrence, "The British in Mesopotamia," *Sunday Times*, August 27, 1920.

Research Methodology

Assigned to Commander's Advisory Group (CAG) CENTCOM, Tampa, FL Sept.03

- Assigned to OPCC, Republican Palace, Baghdad, October-December 03; Feb-March 04.
- Tasks Assigned:
  – Study Security Situation and provide input into Security Sector Reform (SSR)
  – Study Insurgency and help draw up COIN strategy
- Literature Review and Comparative Case Studies:
  – Other Insurgencies in Middle East
  – Insurgencies outside of the Middle East: Malaya, Philippines, Greece

Research in Baghdad, Mosul, Fallujah, Ramadi, Balad, Tikrit, Al-Hilla, Al Kut, Karbala, Najaf

Insurgency & COIN in context in Middle East

- ## Conventional Wars
  - Decline in incidences

- ## Non-conventional Wars and WMD
  - Unlikelihood of WMD wars

- ## Unconventional Wars
  - Increase in incidences

Principles of Insurgency

- Protracted Warfare and Time

- Population as center of gravity

- Blurred boundaries between civilian and military spheres

- Infrastructure & Organization

- Asymmetric Tactics of Insurgent Warfare

Sunni Arab Insurgency I:
Origins/Causes

- **Understanding Iraq**
  - Formation of the country
  - Political Evolution

- **Material Origins/Causes of Insurgency**
  - Demise of Sunni Arab Domination
  - Disbanding of Armed Forces and Ba`th Party
  - US Policy/CONOPS
  - Lack of security, law and order and positive vision

- **Ideational Origins/Causes**
  - Identity Politics
  - Fear of Shi`i and Iranian domination

Sunni Arab Insurgency II: Insurgent Typology

- Former Regime Elements

- Armed Forces Officers & Enlistees

- Mainstream Sunni Conservative Elements

- Tribal Elements

- Native and Foreign *Jihadists*

Sunni Arab Insurgency III: Goals

- Kick out the foreign occupation

- Overthrow "puppet regime"

- Establish an "independent nationalist" centralized government

    One of the least developed aspects of the insurgency: Why?

Sunni Arab Insurgency IV: Operational Art

- Asymmetric Warfare
- "Swarm" Warfare
- Political, Information Ops & PsyOPs Campaign
- Intelligence, Surveillance and OPSEC
- Use of the Internet
- Use of the Mosques

Sunni Arab Insurgency V: Tactics

- Improvised Explosive Devices
- Suicide Bombings
- Assassination/Kidnapping/Abductions
- Small Unit Attacks
- Sabotage
- Ambushes
- Snipers
- RPG "hunter-killer" units
- Mortar units

Sunni Arab Insurgency V: Targets

- Coalition Forces
- Iraqi Police and National Guards
- Critical Infrastructure
- Very Important Persons (VIPs)
- Contractors
- Religious leaders
- Academics/Intellectuals/ government officials/professionals
- Foreign Companies
- Iraqi Civilians working with Coalition Forces or Interim Government

Shi`i Arab Insurgency I: Origins/Causes

- Historical Understanding the Shi`is of Iraq
- Shi`is under Saddam Hussein
- Current Political and Socioeconomic Dynamics
- Tensions between returnees and local Shi`is
- Conflict over future direction of country
- The key role of Moqtada al-Sadr

Shi`i Arab Insurgency II: Moqtada's Goals

- Tactical:
  - Preempt his arrest
  - Enhance his stature

- Strategic:
  - Emerge as key political player
  - De-legitimize the interim government
  - Defend Islam and Iraq against coalition
  - Help force the "occupation" out of Iraq
  - Establish Islamic government in Iraq

Shi`i Arab Insurgency III: Operational Art/Tactics

- Origins of *Jaysh al-Mahdi*

- Operational Art of *Jaysh al-Mahdi*

- Tactics of *Jaysh al-Mahdi,* April 04 & August 04

Insurgency 2004
The Perfect Storm?

- Increased support within Sunni Arab community
- Coalescing of Sunni and Shi`i Opposition to occupation?
- Continuation of low-level decentralized insurgency
- Massive national resistance
- Civil War
- Complex Warfare Patterns

Principles of COIN & U.S. Approach in Iraq

- Have a clear-cut political goal
- Devise an integrated plan
- Ensure civil-military coordination and cooperation
- Center of gravity is the population
- Build an integrated intelligence picture
- Function according to legal standards

"Son, inside every Hajji is an American struggling to come out!"

I don't think so!

U.S. COIN
& Capabilities-Based Planning

- U.S. Military Culture & COIN

- Adaptability, Re-structuring & COIN

- Future Threats, Capabilities-based planning & COIN